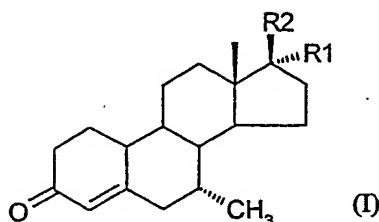


CLAIMS

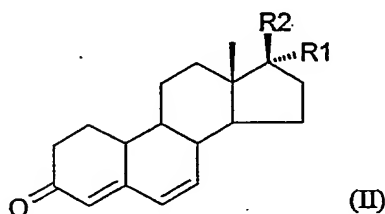
1. A process for the preparation of 7 $\alpha$ -methyl steroids of the formula I



wherein R1 is hydrogen, methyl or C $\equiv$ CH;

R2 is (CH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>n</sub>OH, wherein n is 0, 1 or 2;

by a copper mediated 1,6-conjugate addition of a Grignard reagent CH<sub>3</sub>MgX, X being a halogen, to the 4,6-unsaturated 3-ketosteroid of formula II,



wherein R1 and R2 are as previously defined,

comprising protecting the hydroxy group of the steroid of formula II with a trialkylsilyl group, followed by treating the hydroxy protected steroid with the Grignard reagent.

2. The process of claim 1, wherein R1 is hydrogen, methyl or C $\equiv$ CH and R2 is OH; or R1 is hydrogen and R2 is (CH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>2</sub>OH.

3. The process of claims 1 or 2, wherein the Grignard reagent is CH<sub>3</sub>MgCl.

4. The process of any one of claims 1 - 3, wherein the trialkylsilyl group is a trimethylsilyl group.

5. The process of any one of claims 1 - 4, wherein the solvent of the Grignard reaction is tetrahydrofuran, diethyl ether or a mixture thereof.

6. The process of any one of claims 1 - 5, wherein the concentration of the steroid is 0.1 to 0.3 molar.

5 7. The process of any one of claims 1 - 6, wherein the molar ratio of the steroid to the Grignard reagent is 1:1 to 1:7.

8. The process of any one of claims 1 - 7, wherein as copper catalyst copper(II) acetate or copper(II) chloride is used.

0 9. The process of any one of claims 1 - 8, wherein the reaction temperature of the Grignard reaction is -78 °C to 0 °C.

10. The compound 21-hydroxy-19-norpregn-4,6-dien-3-one.